

## When the Adrenaline Fades by elizabethcatherine

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Angst with a Happy Ending, But He's Unconscious Most of the Time, Concussions, Gen, Hurt Steve Harrington, Hurt/Comfort, Light Angst, No Slash, One Shot, Post-Season/Series 02 Finale, Steve Harrington is a Good Guy, Steve and Dustin Are Bros, Steve-centric, Vomiting

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Max (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington

**Relationships:** Steve Harrington & Dustin Henderson, Steve Harrington & The Stranger Things Kids

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2017-11-12

**Updated:** 2017-11-12

**Packaged:** 2022-04-02 14:48:28

**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,345

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

The portal closes, and Steve goes down hard.

## When the Adrenaline Fades

### Author's Note:

- For [define\\_lying](#).

We saw Steve get kicked, punched, headbutted and beaten bloody, and then we saw him get back up to help save the day. Here's what happens after the adrenaline fades.

A prompt fill of sorts for [define\\_lying](#). Hope you like it :)

Rated for language and nothing more; beware of season two spoilers ahead.

As the lights on the stolen Camaro flared and then dimmed, the kids released a unanimous sigh of relief. They weren't sure how they knew, but the knowledge was as certain as the weariness in their bones: it was over. The portal had been closed. In another life, they might've cheered triumphantly, might've whooped and high-fived, but as it was, they were filthy and exhausted and more than a little bit traumatized, and the most they could manage was to smile tiredly at one another and let the adrenaline finally subside. It was then, as they stood exchanging smiles, that Steve collapsed.

"Steve!" the kids cried in unison, rushing to surround him where he lay on his back. Dustin let loose a string of expletives that could've made a sailor blush as he crouched beside his fallen friend. "Steve! Come on, wake up, man!" he pleaded, lightly smacking one pallid cheek.

"Watch your language, shi'head," Steve mumbled around a swollen lip, words slurring with exhaustion and pain. Relief washed over the group once again, but before anyone could respond, he promptly twisted to the side and vomited onto the grass. Lucas and Max, who had been crouching on that side, hastily scurried away from the splash zone while Dustin rubbed Steve's back, grimacing at the mess.

"Alright, you're alright, you're gonna be okay," he murmured, keeping up the litany of reassurances for himself as much as for Steve. "You're gonna — oh, fuck, is that blood?!" Alarm set his heart racing as they all leaned over the foul-smelling puddle to see flecks of darkness shining crimson in their flashlights' beams. Oblivious to their panic, Steve coughed and spat to clear the taste from his mouth and then let his head thunk back to the ground, groaning weakly and wrapping an arm around his aching ribs.

"We need to get him to a hospital," Max said frantically, wild-eyed with fear. She tried to ignore the pang of guilt over what her stepbrother had done.

"Agreed," Lucas chimed in, staring at Steve worriedly. The older boy appeared to have lost consciousness, which didn't bode well.

"The hospital's too far," Mike said firmly. "We barely made it here with Max behind the wheel - if we try to drive all the way to the hospital, we'll die in a fiery crash." When Max scowled and Lucas opened his mouth to protest, he held up a hand. "I'm not saying he shouldn't go to the hospital, but our best bet is to get back to Will's house and wait for someone with an actual driver's license."

"He's right," Dustin said as he smoothed the hair off of Steve's forehead. "Let's get him in the car. Who knows — someone might've made it back to Will's already." Lucas and Max nodded, albeit reluctantly, and together they managed to get Steve into the car, where they resumed their earlier positions: Max in the driver's seat, Lucas riding shotgun, and Mike and Dustin in the back with Steve sandwiched in between.

Mike glanced at Steve apprehensively as Max started the car. "Even though he totally freaked out last time, I kinda wish he'd wake up again."

"Tell me about it," Dustin agreed, pressing the ice pack to Steve's forehead even though it had long since lost its coldness. His other hand he kept wrapped around Steve's wrist, clinging to his pulse like a lifeline.

"I mean, what do you think's wrong with him?" Lucas asked, twisting

around from the front seat. Fear shone darkly in his eyes. "I'm pretty sure getting hit in the head doesn't make you barf blood."

"No idea," Dustin replied, his imagination alight with all the terrible possibilities. "Maybe—"

"Could you guys stop talking?" Max growled through gritted teeth as she struggled to navigate the dark and twisting road.

"Sorry," came the quiet response, and not another word was spoken until they reached their destination.

"Billy's still in there," Lucas said nervously as Max put the car in park. "What if he's awake?"

"He won't mess with us again," Max reassured him with confidence. "He knows what'll happen if he does." She picked up Steve's bat anyway, just in case, and led the way inside with Lucas on her heels. Hefting Steve up from the backseat, Mike and Dustin pulled one of his arms over each of their shoulders and supported his limp body between them. Steve's head hung low, chin grazing his chest and ridiculous hair flopping everywhere.

Inside, a welcome sight greeted them: Nancy and the Byers had made it home. Will seemed to be asleep on the couch, but Nancy, Jonathan and Mrs. Byers were wide-eyed and alert. Nancy let out a little gasp as Steve came into view, her hands going to her mouth. Jonathan and his mother leapt into action. "Get Steve on the couch," Joyce instructed, scooping up her sleeping son in her arms. "I'll put Will in his bedroom." She bustled off as Jonathan relieved Mike and Dustin of their burden, pulling Steve's arm around his own shoulder and carrying him to the pinstriped sofa, where he laid him down gently.

"Uh, was there someone else here when you got home?" Lucas asked Jonathan as he took inventory of Steve's many cuts and bruises.

"Yeah. That new kid was unconscious on the floor. We moved him." Jonathan seemed to accept this as just another fact of their hopelessly screwed-up lives.

"What exactly happened?" Joyce asked as she returned to the living

room. "I want the whole story. Including why there's a teenager passed out in my kitchen."

As the kids scrambled to explain, words tumbling over one another in a rush, Jonathan motioned Nancy over to the couch. "While they're doing that, could you grab an ice pack or two? We need to get some of this swelling down." She nodded and headed to the kitchen, studiously ignoring Billy Hargrove slumped nearby as she rifled through the freezer.

"And he threw up blood!" Mike was exclaiming as Nancy returned with her quarry to crouch beside Jonathan. A chill ran through her at her brother's words.

"You said Billy kicked him?" Joyce asked, now perched next to Steve on the edge of the couch. When the kids nodded, she moved his jacket out of the way and pulled up his shirt. Dark bruising mottled the skin low on his ribcage, drawing sounds of dismay from the group. As gently as she could, Joyce pressed down along Steve's ribs with two fingers, checking both the bruised area and his stomach. After a moment, she let out a sigh of relief. "I don't think there's any internal bleeding. None of his ribs are broken and his abdomen isn't rigid. He probably swallowed the blood earlier, while his nose was bleeding. He has a nasty concussion, but I think that's the worst of it."

"Thank god," Nancy breathed as the tension in the room dissipated. She handed Jonathan an ice pack and held another to Steve's painfully swollen right eye.

"How'd you know that stuff, Mom?" Jonathan asked, gently pressing his ice pack to Steve's ribs.

Joyce smiled a little wistfully. "I used to want to be a nurse. Went to nursing school for a year, actually."

"We're lucky you did, Mrs. Byers," Dustin said with a grin. "So how can we help?"

"Well, the main treatment for a concussion is rest," Joyce replied, smiling back, "so let's clean him up a bit and let him sleep." With

that, the group dispersed, scurrying away to find Band-Aids and washcloths and water and Aspirin and whatever else he might need. Jonathan left to check on Will, and Nancy went with him. Only Dustin remained, sitting at Steve's side with an ice pack in each hand; it was he who felt the teenager stir, who watched the split lip twitch and the eyelids flutter. He grinned.

"Dustin?" Steve mumbled weakly as a curly head and a toothy smile came into focus. "S'over? S'gone?"

"Yeah, Steve," Dustin answered happily, patting his friend on the arm. "And we totally kicked its ass."

### **Author's Note:**

As always, hope you enjoyed. Drop a review with comments, questions, critiques — I welcome them all!